

MESOPOTAMIAN MINUTE

- Current News on Agriculture & USDA in Iraq -
Office of Agricultural Affairs, U.S. Embassy, Baghdad

Sunday, April 25, 2010

Soil Fertility Training - USDA Soil and Water Ministerial Advisor Dr. Mike Gangwer (white shirt, tie, books in hand) and the Baghdad PRT recently trained over 30 Iraqis on the use of soil testing kits. The two day course included a classroom lecture, a field exercise, and laboratory training. Soil fertility testing is a critical but frequently missing component of successful farming. It helps to guide farmers on the efficient use of water and fertilizers, both of which are scarce in Iraq. The most encouraging outcome of the seminar? The Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture has taken 'ownership' and will provide for future soil testing training.



June 7-9 Ag Trade Mission Planning Continues –So far 27 U.S. companies have signed up to participate in the first U.S. ag trade mission to Iraq in decades. For more information, please contact Darrell Upshaw (Darrell.Upshaw@fas.usda.gov).

IAER II Erbil Conference Coming Up – Planning is underway for the May 16- 21 Iraq Agricultural Extension Revitalization (IAER) II conference in Erbil, Kurdistan. This is the latest activity in an ongoing cooperative effort between USDA, NIFA, U.S. land grant universities and the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture. Since 2008, IAER II has provided training to over 60 Iraqi professionals in various technical agricultural subjects and Extension Methodology. The weeklong conference will feature reporting on how the IAER II participants have applied what they learned during their training in the United States.

Personnel Update – There are currently 38 USDA personnel in Iraq including those with Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, or embedded with U.S. military units.
